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Note verbale dated 28 March 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the President of the Human Rights Council

The Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations Office at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the President of the Human Rights Council, and has the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 21 March 2014 from the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations Office and to the Conference on Disarmament addressed to the President of the Human Rights Council (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of Canada kindly requests that the present note verbale and the letter attached thereto* be circulated as a document of the twenty-fifth session of the Human Rights Council under agenda item 5, and that it also be posted on the website of the Council.

* Reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

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Annex

[English only]

Letter dated 21 March 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the President of the Human Rights Council

Further to the concerns I raised with you at yesterday's Western Europe and Other's Group meeting about the importance of the President of the Human Rights Council continuing to be a champion for the full and safe participation of civil society representatives in our collective work, I am writing to express the Government of Canada's serious concern regarding the alleged intimidation of a Canadian national, Ms Ti-Anna Wang, on March 19, 2014 during the Council session on China's UPR adoption.

The Government of Canada is extremely troubled by this case – which we view as an act of potential intimidation against Ms. Wang.

Based on the information we have received to date, we understand that a representative of an ECOSOC accredited organization called "China Association for Preservation and Development of Tibetan Culture" took pictures of Ms Ti-Anna Wang, her computer screen and belongings in the Council Chamber. This is in direct contravention of warnings posted in Room XX.

We appreciate the quick reaction of UN Security in escorting the individual out of the Chamber, verifying that such pictures had indeed been taken and requiring their deletion. Unfortunately, it appears that the NGO representative in question was then allowed to return to the Council.

The role of civil society in the effective functioning of the Human Rights Council is fundamental, and has been emphasized by the Council on several occasions including in HRC resolution 5/1. Your leadership therefore in ensuring a safe and enabling environment is vital. In this regard, I would like to respectfully request that you:

(1.) Make a public statement in the HRC condemning any form of intimidation and harassment of civil society representatives;

(2.) Ensure that this incident is investigated by UNOG to determine whether the NGO in question should have their credentials reviewed;

(3.) Bring this incident to the attention of the relevant UN mechanisms dealing with reprisals against human rights defenders.

I would like to express my appreciation for your attention to this issue, and would ask that you circulate this and the annex thereto as a document of the Human Rights Council under Agenda Item 5.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*) Elissa Golberg
Ambassador, Permanent Representative